UNIVERSITY OF LIFE SCIENCES ”KING MIHAI I” FROM TIMISOARA
”YOUNG PEOPLE AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN APPLIED LIFE SCIENCES”

13-14 November 2025

PORTUGAL'S CULINARY HERITAGE – BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

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Abstract: *Portuguese cuisine is notable for the simplicity of its dishes and the emphasis on local ingredients, particularly fish, seafood, olive oil, wine, and aromatic herbs. It has been influenced by the era of great maritime discoveries (Africa, Brazil, India) and has a strong regional identity. Portuguese cuisine is considered one of the most authentic in Europe, combining Mediterranean influences (olive oil, aromatic herbs) with legacies brought back by Portuguese sailors from former colonies (spices from Asia and Africa, sugar cane, pepper, coriander).*
Portuguese gastronomy remarkably reflects the historical, cultural, and geographical identity of the country, constituting a veritable intangible heritage. The evolution of Lusitanian cuisine is closely linked to the multiple influences that have marked the territory over the centuries, from the Moorish and Roman occupations to the age of great geographical discoveries, all contributing to the diversification of ingredients and culinary techniques.
The study aims to explore and present Portuguese gastronomy from a cultural and historical perspective, focusing on the traditional dishes that define Portugal's culinary identity.

• Introduction

Portuguese cuisine reflects the history, geography, and maritime spirit of this country. Located at the border between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, Portugal has developed a cuisine rich in flavors, but based on simplicity and the naturalness of local ingredients. Fish and seafood occupy a central place, with Portugal being one of the countries with the highest per capita consumption of fish in the world. Bacalhau – dried and salted cod – is considered the "national dish," with over 365 different recipes. Other essential ingredients are pork, potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, garlic, and coriander, all cooked with high-quality olive oil.

• Material and method

In this study, the authors consulted a rich bibliography, namely scientific papers, various publications. The methodology of the article combines standard research techniques and methods: documentation, analysis and synthesis and formulation of conclusions.

• Results and discussions

Despite the variety of ingredients brought to present-day Portugal over the centuries, Portuguese cuisine stands out for its simplicity and the quality of its raw ingredients.

"Caldo Verde" is a traditional Portuguese soup, originating in the northern regions of Portugal. The dish is based on a combination of mashed potatoes, which give it a creamy consistency, and finely chopped *couve galega* (Portuguese cabbage) leaves, which give it its distinctive green color, hence the name of the dish. The basic flavors come from onions and garlic, and the addition of *chouriço*, a traditional smoked sausage, adds a pleasant, distinctive taste. Extra virgin olive oil is used at the end to add a specific aroma.

"Canja de galinha" is a traditional Portuguese chicken soup, considered a comforting and light dish, often eaten during convalescence or as a simple family meal. It is made from boiled chicken, rice or fine pasta *(massa pevide)*, onion and sometimes carrot, resulting in a clear liquid in which the chicken meat is shredded.

"Cataplana" refers to both a culinary dish and the pot in which it is cooked. The pot, originally from the Algarve, is made of copper and shaped like a shell with two parts that close tightly, allowing the ingredients to be steamed and the flavors to be preserved. The dish most commonly associated with this pot is a fish or seafood stew, often with tomatoes, onions, white wine, and aromatic herbs.

"Bacalhau" refers to salted and dried cod, a food that plays a central role in Portuguese cuisine. Before consumption, the fish is rehydrated and desalinated, then used in various recipes, from oven-baked dishes to salads and stews.

"Arroz de mariscos" is a dish made with rice and seafood, originating in Portuguese cuisine, in which the rice is cooked in a fish broth and mixed with various seafood such as shrimp, mussels, squid, and clams, plus vegetables. It is generally prepared by sautéing vegetables (onions, garlic, peppers, tomatoes), adding rice and fish broth, then cooking it together with the seafood.

• Conclusions

Portuguese cuisine is a harmonious blend of tradition and global influences, an expression of the culture of a seafaring people who have managed to bring the world to their plate without losing their authenticity. Traditional Portuguese dishes are characterized by the simplicity and harmony of their ingredients, often featuring eggs, olive oil, and various spices..